

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4040

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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SUBJECT: SECSTATE MIDEAST VISIT-MEDIA REACTION MAR 10

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BEIRUT FOR VOA

1. SUMMARY: PRESS TODAY HEADLINED AND COMMENTED ON U.S. SECRETARY'S VISIT TO SYRIA AND ISRAEL. IN ADDITION TO VISIT STRESS WAS ON SYRIAN POSITION AND PRESIDENT ASAD PROPOSAL OF JOINT COMMAND WITH PLO. THE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI POSITIONS WERE EQUALLY TREATED. AD-DUSTOUR BANNERED; "ASAD SAYS SYRIA ACCEPTS A TEMPORARY ACCORD ON CONDITION IT INCLUDES EGYPTIAN, SYRIAN AND JORDANIAN FRONTS. THE SYRIAN PALESTINIAN UNIFIED COMMAND COULD TAKE PALESTINIANS TO GEBNVA...BUT WOULD PREVENT SYRIANS FROM GOING THERE". REFERRING TO THE ADAMANT SYRIAN PO-
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SITION, AR-RAI SAYS IN HEADLINE, "A TEDIOUS

ROAD IN FRONT OF KISSINGER. THE ISRAELI POSITION ON SYRIA'S PROPOSAL OF JOINT COMMAND IS NEGATIVE." AS-SABAH SAYS: "ISRAELI OFFICIALS CONDEMN ASAD'S PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A JOINT COMMAND BETWEEN SYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS". "EITHER WE GO TOGETHER OR NOT AT ALL." END SUMMARY.

2. AD-DUSTOUR EDITORIALY DEALS WITH SYRIAN PROPOSAL OF SYRIAN PLO JOINT COMMAND WHICH PAPER CALLS "SURPRISING". PAPER CONCLUDES THAT PROPOSAL WILL ULTIMATELY ENABLE PALESTINIANS TO ATTEND GENEVA AND NEUTRALIZE EFFORTS OF REJECTIONIST GROUP AMONG PALESTINIANS. ARTICLE FURTHER COMMENTS ON KISSINGER'S MISSION IS NOT COMING FROM SYRIA OR THE PALESTINIANS....THE ISRAELIS STILL IMAGINE THAT THEY ARE IN A POSITION TO OBTAIN AN OPEN DECLARATION OF NON-BELLIGERENCY FROM EGYPT.... THIS KIND OF NAIVE THINKING REPRESENTS THE THREAT TO HIS MISSION... AND IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE ISRAELI MENTALITY, AS CHARACTERIZED BY ARROGANCE AND BLACKMAIL."

3. AR-RAI ASKS: "ARE WE STILL IN THE EQUATION CIRCLE?" OBSERVERS SAY THAT RESULT OF KISSINGER-SADAT MEETING IS POSITIVE, BUT THERE REMAINS PALESTINE QUESTION IN NEED OF SOLUTION. PRESIDENT ASAD PROPOSED JOINT COMMAND WITH PALESTINIANS TO ENABLE THEM TO REPRESENT THEIR PEOPLE IN GENEVA CONFERENCE. PAPER GIVES THREE REASONS FOR THIS PROPOSAL. FIRST, IT PROVIDES REASONABLE AND BASIC COVER IN FACE OF REJECTIONIST FRONT. SECOND, IT PROVIDES POLITICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL DISCIPLINE IN PLO AND THIRD MIGHT POSSIBLY LOOSEN ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE. PAPER FINALLY WARNS ARABS NOT TO IGNORE HOSTILE ISRAEL WHILE THEY DISCUSS JUST PEACE AND WORK IN UNISON.

4. AS-SABAH COMMENTS, "KISSINGER'S SHORT VISIT TO DAMASCUS INDICATES THAT HE IS CONSIDERING A NEW SEPARATION AGREEMENT ONLY ON THE SINAI FRONT. PEACE-UNCLASSIFIED

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LOVING ARABS THEREFORE ARE NOT EMBRACING KISSINGER'S OPTIMISM, WHICH IS MAINLY AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR AN ISRAELI EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT RATHER THAN FOR PEACE ON ALL FRONTS.... KISSINGER WILL THEREFORE HAVE TO FACE STRONG OPPOSITION FROM THE GOVERNMENTS AND PEOPLES OF THE AREA..."

5. THE WEEKLY AMMAN AL-MASA' BANNERLINE POSSIBLE CONVENING OF MINI-ARAB SUMMIT INCLUDING JORDAN, SYRAI, EGYPT, KUWAIT, SAUDI ARABIA AND PLO. IN ITS EDITORIAL, THE PAPER SAYS THAT THE PROBLEM CANNOT BE SOLVED BY REOPENING OF SUEZ CANAL AND FREEING OF PASSES IN MITLA AND ABU RDEIS OIL FIELDS FROM ISRAELI OCCUPATION. PROBLEM IS FAR BIGGER THAN THAT. IT IS QUESTION OF ZIONIST UUSURPATION OF PALESTINE SOIL. WRITER PREDICTS THAT TENSION WILL INCREASE AND ACTIVITY FAR MORE SERIOUS THAN SAVOY HOTEL, MA'LOT AND OTHER OPERATIONS IN ISRAEL WILL TAKE PLACE.
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